

**REMARKS**

Claims 1–25 are pending in the application.

In the Office Action, Claims 1–25 were rejected.

With this amendment, Claims 1 and 15 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced as a result of this amendment.

Accordingly, Claims 1–25 are at issue.

**I. 35 U.S.C. § 102 Anticipation Rejection of Claims**

Claims 1, 2, 6-13, 15, 16, 20-24, 26, and 27 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) were rejected as anticipated by Stefik et al. (“Stefik”) USP 5,629,980.

Although Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections, independent Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to clarify the invention and remove any ambiguities that may have been the basis for these rejections.

Each of the independent Claims 1 and 15 requires a creation of an “issue log” by a clearing center. Moreover, amended Claims 1 and 15 recite that this issue log is created, stored and provided to the user device independently of the content, and includes information indicating an allowable amount of electronic money and an electronic money balance.

In contrast, in Stefik the digital rights are permanently “attached” to the digital work (content) (See Column 6, lines 51–56). Stefik further reiterates this digital rights relationship to the corresponding digital work by stating in reference to FIG. 1 that “the creator will then determine appropriate usage rights and fees, attach them to the digital work, and store them in Repository 1, step 102.” (See Column 7, lines 6–11).

Thus, Stefik fails to teach or suggest that the issue log is created independently of the content.

Accordingly, Claims 1 and 15 are allowable over Stefik, as are dependent claims 2, 6-13, and 16, 20-24, 26, and 27, respectively, for at least the same reasons.

**II. 35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection of Claims**

Claims 3-5, 14, 17-19 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Stefik et al. (“Stefik”).

Claims 3–5 and 14 are dependent on Claim 1, shown above to be allowable over Stefik. Thus, Claims 3–5 and 14 are also allowable over Stefik

Claims 17-19 and 25 are dependent on Claim 15, shown above to be allowable over Stefik. Thus, Claims 17-19 and 25 are also allowable over Stefik.

**III. Conclusion**

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that all claims are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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